by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Calcutta, copies of which are available in the Parliamentary Library. India exported marine products to the tune of 22050 MT worth Rs. 225 Crores in the month of April, 1997-98.

(b) Statewise export statistics of marine and meat products are not maintained. However, exports of marine products are mainly taking place from units located in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Gujarat, Orissa etc. Meat products are mainly exported from Maharashtra. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, etc.

(c) and (d) A few complaints have been received from the foreign buyers regarding the quality of marine products which are at the different stages of enquiry. No complaints regarding the quality of meat products have been received.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The world trade in marine products during the year 1995 is estimated to be 110 Million Tons valued at US $ 47 Billion. The world trade in meat and meat products is estimated at about 14 million Tons.

(g) 203 marine products units were assisted by *(MPEDA) investing an amout of Rs. 101.30 lakhs for establishing mini laboratries **(APEDA) provided assistance for upgradation of public sector slaughter houses/ processing plants engaged in export production, to the tune of Rs. 106.88 lakhs in the period from 1994-95 till 1996-97.

(h) The steps taken up for improving the qualiity and boosting the export of marine products relate to technical assistance to processors and exporters for complying with requisite standards, interaction with health authorities for resolving quality problems, encouraging the industry to upgrade the facilities, organising training/seminars, participation in trade fairs abroad and undertaking promotional measures for increasing market shares in existing as well as potential markets. The steps taken up in respect of meat products relate to prescribing standards for export of raw and processed meat products, providing financial assistance for upgradation of slaughter houses, undertaking market promotion activities in overseas markets and arranging buyer-seller meets as well as participation in trade fair abroad.

*Marine Products Export Development Authority.

**Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority.

Remunerative Price for Rubber and Cardamom

6511. SHRI P.C. THOMAS :
PROF. P.J. KURIEN :
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the prices of cash crop in Kerala especially rubber and cardamom has declined during the recent months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any representation has been received from the Government of Kerala in this regard;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to ensure remunerative prices to the growers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (e) There has been a fall in price of rubber during the recent months. This was due to seasonal arrivals in the market and some what sluggish demand from industry. However of late, prices of rubber have started firming up and as on 8th May, 1997, the price of RSS-IV variety of rubber at Kottayam was Rs. 48 per kg.

The weighted average domestic price of small cardamom has shown a mixed trend in the recent past. The reason for variation has been the imbalance between domestic demand and supply of cardamom.

In respect of cardamom no representation was received from the Government of Kerala. In March, 1997, the Govt. of Kerala had written drawing attention to the low levels of rubber prices and were assured of a careful watch being kept on the price situation. There is now a firm upward trend in prices.

Some of the steps taken by the Government to ensure remunerative prices to the growers of cardamom include production and supply of planting material, assistance for replantation of old diseased plant, subsidy for irrigation and level development, participation, participation in domestic/international fairs, reimbursement of air-freight charges for export in consumer pack by air to middle east destinations and exemption of cess on export of cardamom etc. Further, all concerned customs

authorities and their field formations have been alerted and are vigilant to prevent any smuggling of cardamom from Nepal to India.

[Translation]

Indo-US Trade Relation

6512. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :
SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to strengthen Indo-American trade relations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) USA is India's single largest trading partner and constant endeavour is being made for further expanding, strengthening and deepening economic & commercial ties with USA through several bilateral mechanisms such as Indo-US Commercial Alliance, Indo-US Economic and Commercial Sub-Commission, Indo-US Joint Business Council, Indo-American Chamber of Commerce.

[English]

MMTC Favouritism to certain Exporters

6513. SHRI RAM BAHADUR SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether certain officials of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation have been recently found involved in showing favouritism to certain exporters causing substantial loss to the Government ;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent of loss suffered by the Government as a result thereof; and

(d) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) There is no commercial decision of the MMTC resulting in substantial loss to the Government Exchequer. However, some complaints against their commercial decisions have been received which are presently with the investigating agencies. A separate inquiry at the Government level has been conducted in the case of M/s. Pestal Waves, UK in which MMTC has suffered a marginal loss. Disciplinary proceedings have been ordered against the concerned officials.

Textiles Mills

6514. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of NTC, STC and private sector textile mills in the country as on date;

(b) the number of such mills sick as well as closed down during each of the last three years till date, alongwith the number of textile workers rendered jobless due to closure, State-wise; and

(c) the details of the funds allocated and provided for rehabilitation of textile workers during each of the last three years, State-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) As on 31.12.96, management-wise break-up of Cotton/Man-made Fibre Textile Mills in the country is as under :

Management	No. of Mills
Public (NTC/STC)	188
Cooperative	146
Private	1251

(b) A Statement is attached.

(c) Since the inception of Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Fund Scheme, as on 31.1.97, Rs. 84.61 crores have been provided to 42461 workers of 28 mills. State-wise details are as follows :

(Rs./Crores)

State	Amount
Gujarat	66.15
Maharashtra	3.90
Tamil Nadu	2.64
Delhi	11.92
Total	84.61